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Democratic party. Mass. Boston.

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RESOLUTIONS

the Republican Citizens of Boston.

AT a numerous and respectable meeting of the Republican Citizens of the town of Boston, assembled in three districts, on Monday the 19th of December, 1808, the following RESOLUTIONS were adopted, with only two dissenting voices ; and a Delegation of four members from each Ward was then chosen to publish the said Resolutions, with a suitable introduction.

At a meeting of said Delegates, on Tuesday the 20th of December, it was voted, unanimously, that the following Introduction do accompany the said Resolutions, signed by the Chairman and Secretary.

WE live under a government, depending, more than any other with which we are acquainted, on the confidence and affections of the people. Whatever speculative objections may be raised against the practicability or permanency of our Constitution, an experience of a full quarter of a century has proved to us its blessings, superior in degree to those enjoyed by any other portion of the earth. Not to feel and acknowledge them would betray our ingratitude ; and not to cherish the institutions, by which those blessings have been secured, would discover ignorance and insensibility.

To such a government it is peculiarly incident to encounter strong and conflicting opinions upon every great and important crisis. Through contests of this nature we have repeatedly passed, since the close of our revolutionary war. The subjects, upon which our principal diversities of opinion have heretofore arisen, have related to questions of internal arrangements and local administration. We have been *Republicans* and *Federalists*, differing from each other on varieties of principle and conduct, as applicable to our own government ; our controversies, inflamed by the warmth and zeal of the disputants, and assuming, at times, a spirit of bitterness and violence, which have excited concern and anxiety in men of reflection of all parties.

Through all these conflicts, and under the ebb and flow of opinions which have divided us, the prosperity of the country has advanced in a regular progression ; our commerce has been extended, and our essential rights have been preserved.

1808

In our intercourse with foreign powers, we have had many difficulties to surmount, many injuries to suffer, and many satisfactions to obtain. The two most powerful nations of the earth are those with whom our relations were most extensive. Since the establishment of our present national constitution, they have been almost constantly at war with each other. We have in times past been on both sides allured to espouse their respective causes. Individuals among us have had their partialities for the one or the other of the belligerents; and these partialities, strengthened by the operations of prejudice, feelings, or interest, have unhappily found their way into our own concerns.

But the great principle of *American Neutrality to European War*, which has been pursued with inflexible perseverance through all the changes of men and of opinions, which we have yet undergone, constitutes the ground on which our maritime rights depend.

During the war which terminated in the peace of Amiens, that *neutrality*, though often violated by both parties, was eventually maintained and acquiesced in by both. Since the renewal of hostilities, it was again acquiesced in by both, in the first instance; but, as the war progressed, the violation of all neutrality became more and more aggravated and atrocious, until, by a sort of concert to destroy all right and justice, and as if determined there should be no peace on earth, while they were at war, both have inflicted the rigors of war upon every thing within their grasp.

In the midst of all their outrages, it is remarkable that neither of the belligerents pretends to have resorted to them for any offence or injury committed by the United States; each asserting that its measures were intended to retaliate on its enemy, and that the injuries arising to us were incidental, and such as could not be avoided.

From this unequivocal avowal of both parties, it might have been expected, that the heart and mind of every American would have been united in a cause, which is most truly the *CAUSE OF THIS COUNTRY*; that every citizen would have felt, that it was not a question of partiality for or against either of them; that it had no concern with the pretensions of two rival candidates for office among ourselves, nor with the divisions and altercations between the parties stiled *FEDERAL* and *REPUBLICAN*; and that it could not have entered into the consideration, whether the Southern and Western, or Northern and Eastern States had assigned to them, by the federal constitution, a few grains too much or too little influence, from the number of their votes in Congress. It was the *cause of America against two powerful European nations, who had made war upon her neutral rights. The rights of this nation are at stake.* The question is, Shall those rights be maintained? And those, who think to decide it by flattering the interests, and stirring the contracted passions of individuals, or by raising the local jealousies of towns and states, discover an equal want of principle and understanding.

And yet there have been those, who, perceiving nothing in the cause of their country but an occasion to promote the purposes of a party, have taken a side against their country ; because they hated the administration ; who, under the most glaring and unsatisfied outrages of one power, have been able to discern nothing but faults of etiquette and punctilio in their own government ; and who have expected to raise themselves to power and consequence by becoming the apologists of those aggressions, and by charging, without evidence, and now in the face of evidence, a gross and culpable partiality on the Executive and Legislature of the Union.

At the first moment when the contemplated ruin to our commerce was discovered, Congress, by the express recommendation of the President, wrested all our commercial property from the rapacity of its enemies by the embargo. The immense amount of the wealth thus saved is of public notoriety ; while the certainty, that, but for this precaution, it would have fallen into their hands, is proved by the fate of that portion of the trade which left our ports immediately before the embargo was laid.

Negotiation with both the offending nations has been held and continued from that time. Every thing that justice and right could urge ; every thing that a spirit of peace and sincerity could suggest, has been attempted, to obtain such a relaxation of their decrees and orders, as should make them consistent with our neutral rights. The appeal to their reason has been fruitless. And the choice between war against both, and a continuance of the suspension of our trade with them, appears again to be returned upon us.

In this state of things, a party has made its appearance, which, not satisfied with having encouraged and excused the aggressions of a foreign power, have attempted a kind of coercion on the government of their own country, to surrender the essential rights of the nation ; threatening to break out in acts of violence against the laws. Meetings of individuals adhering to this party have been held. Resolutions, in our opinion highly injurious to the national character, and at war with the genius of the constitution, have been passed and published ; a spirit of insubordination has been encouraged ; and in one of these proceedings a plain and intelligible appeal is made to the Legislature of this state to interpose their influence and authority in aid of its measures.

As supporters of the constitution and laws, and disclaiming every idea of disrespect to the legislative assembly of our own state, we wish always to speak with deference of their proceedings. To the measures recently adopted by a majority of that body, on the subject of our foreign relations, it is impossible for us to yield our assent ; nor can we withhold from the minority on that occasion the tribute of our acknowledgement, for refusing their sanction to sentiments which we never can share ; and which, if expressed by any other than an authority we delight to honor, we should reject with indignation. We will still hope that the spirit of party will never gain an ascendancy over the public interests, and that



the members of the state governments will think their own authority best entitled to a cheerful and prompt obedience, when it most accords with the rights and powers of the federal compact.

Feeling in common with our fellow-citizens the pressure and privations of our national situation, we have neither doubt nor hesitancy in declaring our opinion of the causes to which alone they are to be imputed ; nor shall we aggravate these calamities by joining with the foreign oppressors against our own country. Our confidence in the sincerity and impartiality of our national government is confirmed by their publication of facts, which remove all doubt, and ought to silence all slander. In this difficult and dangerous crisis, we rejoice to find they have discovered that firm, unbroken spirit, which alone can conduct a nation through scenes of adversity ; and in adopting the following resolutions, it is our intention to give to them and to the world a solemn pledge of our confidence and support.

1st. *Resolved, as the sense of this meeting...* That the embarrassments and distress of the citizens, in consequence of the suspension of commerce, are to be ascribed to the decrees and orders of Great Britain and France, and not to any offence or injury on the part of the government or people of the United States.

2d. *Resolved...* That the measures adopted by the Executive and Congress, to maintain the rights and interests, the honor and independence of the nation, have been dictated by sound policy, and pursued with impartiality, and a sincere regard to our peace and happiness.

3d. *Resolved...* That, at this important crisis of our affairs, every attempt to alienate the public confidence in the constituted authorities of the nation ; every encouragement or proposal to resist the laws, and to sever the union of these States, is criminal in the highest degree, and ought to be met with indignation and abhorrence by every friend of his country.

4th. *Resolved...* That satisfaction for the outrage on the frigate Chesapeake has not been made ; and that the proposal to procure the rescinding of the Proclamation of the President, as a preliminary to reparation for that offence, is insulting to the honor of this nation.

5th. *Resolved...* That, as it is the duty of every citizen, more especially in times of danger, to rally round the government of his country, as the only constitutional organ of defence and safety, we hereby pledge ourselves to the Government under which we live. So long as they remain true to the rights and independence of the nation, so long shall they receive our cordial support to such laws as they may enact, and such measures as they may adopt, to protect these invaluable blessings.

WILLIAM EUSTIS, *Chairman.*

CALEB BINGHAM, *Secretary.*



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